

## Scientists reconstruct yet-to-be-found skull of humans' last common ancestor entirely through computer imaging

[R]esearchers like Dr. [Aurélien] Mounier are using computers and mathematical techniques to reconstruct the appearance of fossils they have yet to find. On [September 10], Dr. Mounier and Marta Mirazón Lahr, a paleoanthropologist at the University of Cambridge in Britain, unveiled a virtual skull [belonging to the last common ancestor of all modern humans](#), who lived in Africa about 300,000 years ago.

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They took CT scans of 260 skulls of people from a wide range of populations — from the inhabitants of African rainforests to Pacific islands to the coasts of Greenland. They also scanned 100,000-year-old skulls found in Israel that are clearly similar to those of living humans.

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Then the scientists placed all of these living and extinct individuals on an evolutionary tree. In doing so, they were able to trace the evolution of skulls along each of the branches, arriving at a picture of the skull of the common ancestor of living humans.

“More or less, it’s quite a modern human,” Dr. Mounier said of the skull. “But it doesn’t really correspond to any current population — it’s something different.”

**Read full, original post:** [Scientists Find the Skull of Humanity’s Ancestor, on a Computer](#)